

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): A niobium powder having a nitrogen content of at least about 500 ppm by weight and not more than about 7,000 ppm by weight, and having a mean particle diameter of at least about 0.2 μm and less than about 3 μm , which contains as impurity at least one element M selected from the group consisting of iron, nickel, cobalt, silicon, sodium, potassium and magnesium in an amount such that each element M is not more than 100 ppm by weight, ~~or the total amount of the element M is not more than 350 ppm by weight,~~ and

wherein the niobium powder has a CV value of ~~at least~~ from 89,600 (CV/g) to 194,000 (CV/g).

2. (original): The niobium powder according to claim 1, which has a mean particle diameter of at least about 0.5 μm and less than about 2 μm .

3. (original): The niobium powder according to claim 1, which has a nitrogen content of at least about 1,000 ppm by weight and not more than about 3,000 ppm by weight.

4. (withdrawn): A sintered body produced from a niobium powder, which has a specific leakage current index of not more than about 400 [pA/($\mu\text{F}\cdot\text{V}$)].

5. (withdrawn): The sintered body according to claim 4, which has a specific leakage current index of not more than about 200 [pA/(μ F·V)].

6. (withdrawn): A sintered body produced from a niobium powder, said niobium powder having a nitrogen content of at least about 500 ppm by weight and not more than about 7,000 ppm by weight, and having a mean particle diameter of at least about 0.2 μ m and less than about 3 μ m.

7. (withdrawn): The sintered body according to claim 6, wherein said niobium powder has a mean particle diameter of at least about 0.5 μ m and less than about 2 μ m.

8. (withdrawn): The sintered body according to claim 6, wherein said niobium powder has a nitrogen content of at least about 1,000 ppm by weight and not more than about 3,000 ppm by weight.

9. (withdrawn): The sintered body according to claim 6, wherein said niobium powder contains as impurity at least one element M selected from the group consisting of iron, nickel, cobalt, silicon, sodium, potassium and magnesium in an amount such that each element M is not more than 100 ppm by weight, or the total amount of the elements M is not more than 350 ppm by weight.

10. (withdrawn): The sintered body according to claim 6, which has a specific leakage current index of not more than about 400 [pA/(μ F·V)].

11. (withdrawn): The sintered body according to claim 6, which has a specific leakage current index of not more than about 200 [pA/(μ F·V)].

12. (withdrawn): A capacitor comprising (i) an electrode, wherein the electrode is a sintered body produced from a niobium powder, (ii) a counter electrode, and (iii) a dielectric intervening between the two electrodes; said niobium powder having a nitrogen content of at least about 500 ppm by weight and not more than about 7,000 ppm by weight, and having a mean particle diameter of at least about 0.2 μ m and less than about 3 μ m.

13. (withdrawn): The capacitor according to claim 12, wherein said niobium powder has a mean particle diameter of at least about 0.5 μ m and less than about 2 μ m.

14. (withdrawn): The capacitor according to claim 12, wherein said niobium powder has a nitrogen content of at least about 1,000 ppm by weight and not more than about 3,000 ppm by weight.

15. (withdrawn): The capacitor according to claim 12, wherein said niobium powder contains as impurity at least one element M selected from the group consisting of iron, nickel, cobalt, silicon, sodium, potassium and magnesium in an amount such that each element M is not

more than 100 ppm by weight, or the total amount of the elements M is not more than 350 ppm by weight.

16. (withdrawn): The capacitor according to claim 12, wherein said sintered body has a specific leakage current index of not more than about 400 [pA/(μ F·V)].

17. (withdrawn): The capacitor according to claim 12, wherein said sintered body has a specific leakage current index of not more than about 200 [pA/(μ F·V)].

18. (withdrawn): The capacitor according to claim 12, wherein said dielectric is formed on a surface of the sintered body.

19. (withdrawn): The capacitor according to claim 12, wherein said dielectric is composed of niobium oxide.

20. (withdrawn): The capacitor according to claim 12, wherein said dielectric is composed of niobium oxide formed by electrolytic oxidation on a surface of the sintered body.